

PPB 73-1490

19 NOV 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Management and Services

SUBJECT: DD/M&S Control of M&S Positions and Personnel

REFERENCE: Memo dated 15 October 1973 to DD/M&S from MSAG, same subject

1. Reference proposes action to bring under DD/M&S control all positions now encumbered by personnel with M&S career designations. The advantages to be gained for the Directorate, and thus the Agency, by this change are seen as improvement in long-range resource planning, better management control, improvement in the level of qualification and experience of M&S personnel assigned to other parts of the Agency, and better career planning and development for M&S personnel. The brief memo which presents this proposal does not include detailed argumentation on these points, but merely asserts that these benefits will accrue if the DD/M&S obtains primary control of all M&S positions.

2. The familiar problem of "double jeopardy," with the M&S Directorate hit twice by personnel reductions by (1) losing a slot and (2) having the former incumbent of the position returned for reassignment, gives proposals such as this one a certain appeal. It seems logical to assume that the DD/M&S would defend M&S positions more energetically than "host" components are likely to do, and thus to conclude that future personnel reductions would be more fairly apportioned among the various career groups. It does not necessarily follow, however, that control of positions is the only way to insure fairness, nor is it clear to us that such control would necessarily bring the other advantages claimed by the MSAG.

3. If a personnel reduction is dictated by a change in function, or if general shrinkage of a component eliminates the need for support services which were once appropriately centralized in a larger


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organizational context, these facts will not be altered just because the DD/M&S has control over the positions in question. In such situations, regardless of who "owns" the positions, appropriate staff levels must be worked out in cooperation between the operating component and the staff elements which provide, one way or another, the various kinds of expertise needed for successful achievement of the component's mission. No conscientious manager will eliminate a position if the specialty represented is essential to his mission. In the last analysis, the decision to cut must be based on judgments regarding utility and need. These judgments can be informed by staff elements, but they must be made by the line managers. Close coordination and continuing, effective dialog between M&S officers and "host" components can assure that the Directorate's interests are protected.

4. As for the question whether control over positions will lead to the advantages claimed, one can argue that these advantages are in fact quite independent of position control. Such control might facilitate long-range planning, but its absence does not preclude planning nor render it ineffective, given a reasonable degree of inter-Directorate cooperation. Assumption of control over all M&S positions would not guarantee management control, improvement in personnel quality, or better career planning, nor does the absence of control by itself nullify efforts to achieve these goals. Control by others over positions filled by M&S careerists is a convenient whipping-boy, but we should resist the temptation to assign to this phenomenon a significance it does not deserve.

5. The foregoing may be taken by the members of the MSAG as an elaborate rationalization to cover reluctance to tackle a politically difficult problem. In fact the change they propose would be hard to sell, politically, but the real reasons for not trying are the substantive ones given above. The change would not be worth the effort needed to bring it about. In the last analysis, the way to more effective M&S management control and resource utilization, particularly of personnel, will have to be by the circuitous route of close coordination and persuasive negotiation, not by the MSAG proposed thruway of legislation.

  
Charles A. Briggs  
Director of Planning,

Programming, and Budgeting

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